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## Work and Workers

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THE position of Dr. James Hastings in the religious and theological world is unique. He does not hold a divinity chair nor the pastorate of a city parish, though he had some four years' experience of the latter. He is a country minister, and yet perhaps no man in Great Britain has done more for theological learning and for the better equipment and education of the modern pulpit than the United Free Church minister of St. Cyrus. This has been done through his work as the editor of his well-known *Bible Dictionaries*. But Dr. Hastings is something more than an editor. He is the originator and architect of every work that bears his name. His career makes it evident that there is a type of mind that can be called peculiarly "encyclopedist." The question naturally arises, What started this great encyclopedist on his unique career? He saw as far back as 1889 that there was a need among ministers for a thoroughly scholarly magazine and yet one more practical and more useful for the immediate requirements of the pulpit than most existing theological periodicals, and so he started the *Expository Times*. How true was the insight may be judged from the large circulation that the magazine, which is just about to attain its majority, has acquired. The same perception of need gave rise to the *Bible Dictionaries*. The older biblical encyclopedias had fallen behind in the march of theological scholarship. A revision of one of the best was promised, but after the first volume appeared, the announcement was made that the revision would not be continued. Evidently theology required a new dictionary, and this need Dr. Hastings set himself to meet. No one but Dr. Hastings himself knows what difficulties he has had to overcome in carrying out his ideas. As an instance, when he first produced the *Expository Times*, a printer in Aberdeen was the publisher; the second month the printer's health gave way; there was no one to attend to the business, and it seemed as if the *Expository Times* was to be stranded, a complete wreck just outside the harbor. But the editor went to Aberdeen and for a week kept shop and literally salvaged his own ship. In sight to see the need was backed by grit to meet it.

In the making of the dictionaries one of the peculiar faculties that has revealed itself is the power of discovering the right man for the right task. The right man may be at the antipodes, a missionary in Central

Africa, a lecturer in a Japanese university, or an exile in Siberia, but wherever he is, the searchlight from St. Cyrus will find him and reveal him as the man for the work. Of the dictionaries themselves there is no necessity to speak. They are monumental, standard, and authoritative. A man in the full prime of life who can lay claim to have founded and edited a *Dictionary of the Bible* in five volumes, another in one, and a *Dictionary of the Gospels* in two, and has on the stocks an *Encyclopedia* that is to cover the whole sphere of religion and ethics in eight or ten volumes might well indulge a feeling of pride and satisfaction. But Dr. Hastings is the humblest of men and his satisfaction is not in himself but in the help he has given to the Christian ministry and the cause of religion. He has a broad, comprehensive, and open mind. He is always learning, adding sphere to sphere of knowledge. In his manse he has housed his growing library of 15,000 volumes, covering literature, philosophy, folklore, theology, and patristics.

Where does he stand in theology? Perhaps the best answer to this question is, that when the first dictionary was drawing to completion he felt that Christ and his teaching had not received adequate treatment, and straightway the *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels* was started. If one were to ask Dr. Hastings how he himself would wish to be known, the answer would be as a minister of the church, and through all his years of strenuous labor and increasing literary responsibility he has faithfully and abundantly discharged the duties of a Christian minister. Through his efforts two new churches have been built, one at Kinneff and another, choice and beautiful in its architecture, at St. Cyrus. Here in simple, earnest, and deep speech he preaches the gospel of Jesus Christ.